Convergence in Music and Language Syntactic Representations
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Hierarchical structure is one unique property of human language, setting it apart from other forms of animal communication. Similarly, the curious ability to produce music exists in all human cultures, also set apart from other species by its hierarchical structure and discrete combinatorial units used for infinite productivity. Because of the shared human-specific properties of music and language, many have explored the connection between the two from various angles. Compared to robust work in phonology, the syntactic literature in music-language connections is scant, with primary descriptive foundations resting on Lerdahl and Jackendoff's 1983 work *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music.* However, little has been done to investigate the basis of structural parallels in music and language from a non-generative perspective. The purpose of this paper is to compile, review, and synthesize research that has been done on music-language syntactic connections, investigating the nature of syntactic "convergence points" between Western Tonal musical structure and linguistic syntactic structure. An overview of structural processing parallels is presented in the introduction, followed by a proposed model of music and language structural mental representations. Crucially, the model is not based on traditional generative accounts for syntax, but rather a construction-based account that explores the commonalities of creative phrase-building across language and music.